

REMARKS

The Examiner had rejected claims 1-32 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention.

As requested by the Examiner, Applicants have amended claim 1 to clarify the Markush grouping. Applicants have removed the “mixture” term, but left the list of possible “cross-linked polymers” (and mixtures thereof) in the Markush format. Therefore, the cross-linked polymer can be any one or more of the recited polymeric substances.

In response to the Examiner’s concerns regarding antecedent basis for claims 3-4 and 28, applicants have amended claim 3 to clarify that the cross-linked polymer is capable of swelling upon exposure to water. Dependent claim 3 is now believed to have proper antecedent basis.

Applicants have also added carboxylated acrylic latexes to the list of cross-linked polymers in claim 1 and have amended claim 4 to remove the “latex adhesive” limitation and replace it with “carboxylated acrylic latex”. This should clarify that, in one embodiment, the cross-linked polymer is a “carboxylated acrylic latex”. Support for the carboxylated acrylic latex limitation can be found in the present application on page 20, lines 10-12. Dependent claim 4 is now believed to have proper antecedent basis from claim 1.

In a previous Office Action, the Examiner had rejected claims 1-20 and 22-42 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by each of five individual references, namely EPO 869,216; EP O 709,507; EPO 113,254; WO 90/02166; and U.S. Patent

No. 5,421,898 to Cavanagh. However, none of the cited references alone or in combination teach or suggest a cross-linked polymer that comprises at least one compound selected from the group consisting of acrylates, styrene butadiene, vinyl chlorides, methacrylates, acrylics, carboxylated acrylic latexes, vinyl acetates, and mixtures thereof.

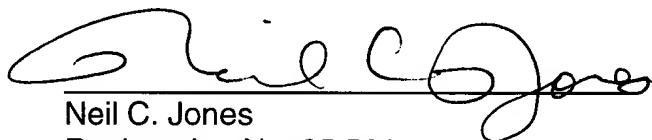
We believe that the present Application is now in complete condition for allowance and, therefore, respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider the rejections in the Office Action and allow this Application. We invite the Examiner to telephone the undersigned should any issues remain after the consideration of this response.

Please charge any additional fees that may be required to Deposit Account No. 50-2548.

Respectfully requested,

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Date



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